

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

From: Henry A. Kissinger

Subject: Parole of Additional Numbers of  
Vietnamese into the U.S.

On April 17, 1975, you approved parole for Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees in six different categories including up to 50,000 "high risk" refugees. The total number of refugees anticipated among the different groups was 130,000. Congress was consulted and agreement was achieved.

We now face a new and continually changing situation. In addition to those Vietnamese we assisted in leaving South Vietnam and who are now already in the U.S. or being processed at Guam and Wake (47,000), there are approximately 80,000 Vietnamese on the high seas or in third countries seeking refuge in the U.S. This figure includes some 70,000 people aboard U.S. naval and chartered vessels and a Vietnamese flotilla of assorted craft, all headed for Subic Bay. We have just learned that a U.S. merchant ship has picked up still another 3,000 from a sinking Vietnamese freighter.

As the Congress has asked, we are doing our best to internationalize the problem both by appealing to international refugee agencies and by making bilateral demarches in foreign countries, asking them to take part in the resettlement of newly displaced Vietnamese. The responses have not been encouraging thus far, although it appears Canada will be helpful. Particularly difficult is the attitude of a number of Asian countries who have their own population problems and are now making adjustments in their relationships with the new communist regimes in Indochina. Singular in this regard are the Philippines and Thailand, who continue to press us to move the refugees from Cambodia and Viet-Nam off their soil.

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Altogether we now have over 120,000 Vietnamese who have fled in one way or another from South Vietnam and Cambodia. This could reach 150,000 or more over the next few weeks. We need to deal with at least 80,000 of these immediately. Many of these people will qualify only within the "high risk" category. There is of course a certain amount of resistance to all of this domestically. We have basically only one option in the manner in which we proceed, given the change in the types of people who may apply for asylum and the fact that we did not in the first instance assist many of them in their departure from Viet-Nam.

I recommend that we ask the Attorney General to immediately authorize the parole of 150,000 Vietnamese and Cambodians into the U.S. with the understanding that we would attempt to resettle at least 20,000 of this number abroad. With an appropriate public presentation of the facts the public should accept the case. With regard to the needed legislation for funds, we suggest the dollar request be based on the assumption that 130,000 will be resettled in the U.S.; that the U.S. will pay, through international agencies, transportation costs to third countries for the remaining 20,000; but that additional funds might be needed to the extent we are unsuccessful in resettling the full 20,000 outside the U.S.